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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/633,772	08/04/2003	Elinor Isobel Forbes	MS-02/3/US	5121
7590	03/22/2005		EXAMINER	
James C. Forbes 1625 Glenview Road, #206 Glenview, IL 60025			HARRIS, CHANDA L	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3714	

DATE MAILED: 03/22/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/633,772	FORBES ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Chanda L. Harris	3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 September 2004.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 21-37 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 21-24,26-30 and 33-37 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 25,31 and 32 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ . |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ . | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ . |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

In response to the Amendment filed 9/10/04, Claims 21-37 are pending.

Terminal Disclaimer Not Accepted

The terminal disclaimer filed on 9/10/04 disclaiming the terminal portion of any patent granted on this application which would extend beyond the expiration date of U.S. Patent No. 6,626,678 has been reviewed and is not accepted because the fee for filing the Terminal Disclaimer has not been paid and there is no authorization of record to charge the fee. Therefore, the Double Patenting rejection from the last office action is maintained.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 21, 22, 26-30 and 33-37 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-2 and 7 of U.S. Patent No. 6,626,678. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the patent claims that the user could be an adult subject, that the pieces are suitable for arrangement by the subject, and the pieces can be used by the subject in a simple assembly. It would further have been obvious that the patent claimed kit has means for engaging pieces on a rack and that where when so engaged, the pieces resist accidental disarrangement (Patent claim 1-(i) means for engaging the tile elements at a plurality of loci on the rack).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 21-24, 26 and 33-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Foresman in view of Monson (US 5,090,935).

Foresman discloses a plurality of pieces that have a surface layer formed of foam and collectively exhibit different tactility when handled (due to different shapes), the pieces suitable for arrangement in simple assembly, and a means for engaging said pieces on a rack wherein the pieces resist disarrangement. The type of user in the

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claimed invention is considered not to further the invention as claimed as a user of Foresman's invention is capable of being an adult subject having a medically diagnosed dementia.

Foresman does not disclose expressly a surface layer formed of a soft fabric (e.g., soft exterior surface made of fabric such as felt or the like). However, Monson teaches pieces (i.e., components) that individually have a surface formed of a soft fabric in Col.3: 5-15. Therefore, at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate a plurality of pieces that individually have a surface layer formed of a soft fabric into the education system kit of Foresman, in light of the teaching of Monson, in order to facilitate safe enjoyment of the kit.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 25 and 31-32 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Citation of Pertinent Prior Art

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Var (US 5,720,617)
 - soft fabric

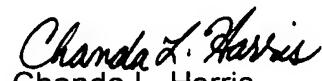
Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. This action is made NON-FINAL.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chanda L. Harris whose telephone number is 571-272-4448. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:30am-4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jessica Harrison can be reached on 571-272-4449. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Chanda L. Harris
Primary Examiner
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